

Lebrum

HEALTH
A 13 SEP 57
CR 20

ALFORD URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH'S ANNUAL REPORT

for the year 1955



Medical Officer of Health
C. S. E. WRIGHT
M.B., B.Ch. D.P.H.

Surveyor and Sanitary Officer
J. WEBSTER
A.R.S.H., M.S.I.A.

May 1956

ALFORD URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

*Report of the Medical Officer of Health
for the year 1955.*

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES, AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present to you the Annual Report for the year ending December 31st, 1955 on the health and sanitary conditions of the Alford Urban District.

I am pleased to be able to report once again that the general health of the District has been good. There was a small outbreak of Measles in the spring, part of the epidemic that affected the whole country, but fortunately in almost all cases it was of a mild type. There were several cases of Pneumonia mostly influenzal in origin, but otherwise there was little in the way of notifiable infectious diseases.

The sanitary conditions of the town have caused no anxiety during the year. The conversion of pail closets to the water-carriage system has continued but there is still much to be done to bring the whole District up to modern standards in this respect.

1955 started with a very cold and wet winter and spring but the second half of the year was noteworthy for the amount of dry and sunny weather experienced to the great benefit of the agricultural industry as well as the health of the people.

During the year our Surveyor and Sanitary Officer, Mr. H. Fell left to take up another appointment and Mr. J. Webster came to take his place.

Vital Statistics.

The area of the District is unchanged at 1,138 acres.

The estimated population is 2,180.

The rateable value for 1955 was £11,608. The product of a penny rate was £44/14/9.226.

The number of inhabited houses was 864.

Births. The live births numbered 34 :- 22 male and 12 female. The number of births in 1955 compares with 35 for 1954, 29 for 1953. The crude birthrate works out at 15.6 per thousand of the population. After the application of the comparability factor, which affords an approximate adjustment to make allowance for the differing age and sex distribution of the

population in different areas, a birthrate of 17.78 is obtained. This latter figure compares with 15.00 per thousand of the population for the whole country. The unusually high birthrate for males as compared with females is very marked again as it was in the two preceding years.

Of the 34 births 4 male and 2 female were illegitimate, a high figure.

There was 1 still-born birth (male.)

Deaths. The deaths numbered 34 also—15 male and 19 female. This figure compares with 41 and 39 for the years 1954 and 1953 respectively. The 34 deaths represent a crude deathrate of 15.6 per thousand of the population of Alford and when the comparability factor is applied the figure of 9.73 is obtained. This latter figure compares with 11.7 for the whole of England and Wales.

For the third year in succession, I am glad to be able to report, that there was no death among infants under one year of age.

Causes of death :-

Cause	Male	Female
Tuberculosis		1
Cancer of the Respiratory organs ...	2	
Cancer, other forms	1	1
Vascular diseases of the nervous system	2	4
Coronary disease of the heart	3	1
Heart disease with blood pressure...	1	1
Other diseases of the heart	3	2
Other circulatory diseases		2
Pneumonia	1	1
Bronchitis	1	2
Other diseases of the respiratory organs		2
Kidney disease ...		1
Other defined or ill-defined cause ...	1	
Accident (non-motor)		1
Total	15	19

There were no deaths due to maternal cause or to infectious disease otherwise than the one case of Tuberculosis.

General Provision of Health Services.

Bacteriological examinations are carried out at the Public Health Laboratories at Lincoln or Grimsby. This important service is used more and more every year by medical men practising

in Alford as well as by the Council. Complete chemical and bacteriological reports on water samples when required are obtained from Messrs. W. W. Taylor of Nottingham.

Hospitals and Midwifery and Nursing services are unchanged and continue to work satisfactorily. The Alford Memorial Hospital is in the Grimsby hospital group. It does not admit maternity cases, but when such require hospital treatment admission can be generally be obtained at Spilsby, Louth or Skegness hospitals.

With the exception of Tuberculosis and Acute Poliomyelitis all infectious diseases requiring hospital treatment are sent to Scarthoe Isolation Hospital. Tuberculosis cases are sent to whichever sanatorium is the most suitable for any particular case. All cases of Poliomyelitis in the County are sent to Lincoln Isolation Hospital. I am glad to be able to report that our good record with regard to these latter cases has been maintained.

There is a special clinic for the treatment of cases of Venereal disease, but medical men practising in Alford tell me that fresh cases of these diseases are rarely seen now-a-days, no cases have been reported to me.

Prevalence of Disease.

1955 was on the whole a healthy year and most of the deaths were in old people. Infectious diseases reported were not of a serious type generally. There was a mild outbreak of Measles with 24 cases mainly among the younger school children.

In the spring and early summer there were several cases of Tonsilitis and a few of Chicken-Pox among the children; but, perhaps due to the fine weather of the second half of the year, there was little Influenza in the beginning of the winter.

I am pleased to be able to report again that we had a clean bill of health with regard to Diphtheria. Since the drive began in 1940 to get as many children as possible immunised against this dread disease, Diphtheria has been almost exterminated and there is a tendency for people to think that there is no longer any necessity for their children to receive the protection of immunisation. This is the greatest mistake. Unless the percentage of children immunised is kept at a high level the risk of a return of this disease, which was such a terrible scourge among young children until a few years ago, is very real.

16 children under the age of 5 years and 4 between 5 and 14 years received primary immunisations and 32 received 'booster' doses.

Parents are beginning to appreciate more and more, I am glad to say, the advantage of having their infants immunised also

against Whooping Cough. During the year 16 infants were given this protection.

10 children under one year of age and 1 older child and 1 adult were vaccinated against Small-Pox. There were no revaccinations. The risk of Small-Pox has considerably increased with the speed of modern travel.

The following is a list of the notifiable infestious diseases occuring in the Alford District during the year :-

Measles	....	....	24
Pneumonia	....	....	8
Tuberculosis (pulmonary)	....	....	2
Whooping Cough	....	....	1
Scarlet Fever	....	....	1
Dysentery	....	....	1
Food poisoning	....	....	1
			<hr/>
Total			38
			<hr/>

Housing.

Council property. During the year Chaunty Close No 4 Housing Scheme was completed and the remaining houses and the whole of the thirteen bungalows were finished and occupied. Plans were prepared for No 6 Housing Scheme at Christopher Road although by the end of the year no work had been let.

The Council now owns 144 properties.

Of the 144 houses owned by the Council 13 are bungalows for old people.

There has again been little private development due mainly to the lack of suitable sites. The Council have, however purchased a parcel of land off East End, Alford, for development by private enterprise. Work has already commenced on the laying of sewers and the construction of a carriage-way and public footpaths. It is hoped that the twelve sites which will be provided will be available for development in the early part of 1956.

At the close of the year two houses only had been constructed by private enterprise and the work was continuing on the internal finishings.

SUB-STANDARD HOUSING. A survey was made during the year of poor class property with regard to the question of slum clearance. As a result of this a return was made to the Ministry of 44 houses that were only fit for demolition. The main reasons being bad brickwork, dampness, small and dark rooms and the impossibility of bringing them up to modern standards at any reasonable expense. Many of the people living in these sub-

standard houses pay only 2/- or 3/- a week rent and do not wish to move from them. The rehousing of these people, many of them aged, is a serious problem.

IMPROVEMENT GRANTS. A total of 13 applications was received during the year for improvement grants, of which 11 were approved as suitable for the issue of grants. I hope that in the coming year there will be considerable increase in the number of these applications. Bringing houses up to a good standard by means of grants is infinitely cheaper than building new houses.

The average cost to the Council of each of the 11 improvement grants was £143.

One Council house was sold during the year.

Water.

The Town's water supply continued to be highly satisfactory in both quantity and quality and on no occasion was the result of bacteriological sampling returned as otherwise than class 1. Under normal circumstances samples are taken at the rate of two each week, one from the bore and one from some point in the town. The water continues to be harder in nature than it used to be and this is a source of some nuisance in domestic hot water systems. However, as a general rule new systems installed are of a semi-indirect type which will tend to alleviate the problem in due course. In the meanwhile this increased hardness of water taken from the Spilsby Sandstone is under investigation.

Graphitisation of the pumps is still apparent and towards the latter part of the year a new gunmetal pump was put on order to replace the affected pump at the Council's pumping station. Delivery of this pump is expected in the early part of 1956.

A total of four new connections was made to the Council's water mains during the year.

The Council's attention was again drawn to the lack of a chlorinating plant for the treatment of the water supply and the advisability of installing such plant. It was decided by the Council that this matter should be further discussed in July, 1956.

Consideration was given during the latter part of the year to the provision of additional storage capacity at the reservoir with in addition the provision of a new rising main. In view of the financial restrictions at present in force it was decided that the appropriate Ministry be informed of the Council's intention to carry out the work at a future date when financial conditions had eased.

Sewage and Refuse Collection.

SEWAGE DISPOSAL WORKS. The situation at the disposal works has been satisfactory throughout the year and, except during periods of unusually heavy flow of water due to excessive rain in the watercourse taking the outfall, no difficulties have been experienced and it has been possible to maintain a reserve of sludge drying beds.

The result of a sample of final effluent taken by the Lincolnshire River Board in August was returned as "good."

During the month of August a notice was served on the Council by a firm operating in the town containing the proposal that a trade effluent be admitted to the town sewers. The discharge of which would be a daily maximum of 25,000 gallons. Consulting engineers were engaged and their reports are expected early in 1956. In view of the proportionate increase in the quantity of sewage to be treated, should this effluent be accepted, and in view of the fact that the sewage disposal works as I have in previous reports stated, are already approaching their capacity, it is to be expected that substantial works would be necessary at the plant to accommodate such an increase.

PRIVY CONVERSIONS. During 1955, 17 premises were converted from pail closets to the water carriage system. There are still some 54 properties that have not been converted. This is a high figure when we remember that, except for a very small part of the District, our water mains and our sewers cover the whole town. A few of these cases will be in the near future, I hope, be done away with under the clearance of slum property and the improvement of sub-standard houses. In some cases I am of the opinion that the time is now approaching when a wider use of statutory powers should be instituted to enable the scheme to be brought to a proper conclusion.

REFUSE COLLECTION. This service is a fortnightly one covering the whole area and employing one lorry and two men. It has continued to work satisfactorily throughout the year and there have been no complaints of any kind. Disposal is by tipping and there is sufficient space available to last the Council for some years to come. Though this method of disposal is not entirely as good as I should like, it is working very well and the tip has been kept free from nuisances such as rats, flies and smells and not been an offence to neighbouring households.

OFFENSIVE TRADES. There is one business in the town that comes under this category. Conditions in regard to it have quite satisfactory throughout the year.

RODENT CONTROL. The Council's part-time operator successfully treated all the known rodent infestations as or when

they were notified or discovered. There are no "reservoirs" of rodents in the Urban area. Modern methods of destroying these pests are so effectual that with the co-operation of the general public they should cease to be a menace.

MILK AND ICE-CREAM. There are three distributers of milk in the District. All supplies are either Tuberculin tested or heat treated. There are now no manufactuers of ice-cream in Alford, all that is retailed in the town is prepared by reliable firms.

SLAUGHTER HOUSES. During the year two previously licensed slaughter houses, privately owned and occupied, came into operation. All carcasses have been inspected by the sanitary officer. Unfit meat and animals products are collected by a firm outside the town and are treated by means of I.W.E.L. (Industrial Waste Eliminator) plant, by which means condemned meat etc. is treated and utilised in fertilisers. Other unsound foods are disposed of at the Council's tip.

The following foods have been condemned during 1955.

Meat	600 lbs.
Tinned Meat	60 lbs.
Fish	1 tin.
Fruit	1 tin.

In conclusion may I convey my thanks to the Chairman and Members of the Council for their assistance and support and acknowledge the help given to me by the Clerk to the Council and the Sanitary Officer and Surveyor.

I have the honour to be Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

C. S. E. WRIGHT,

Medical Officer of Health.